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Moses Shongo Wallpaper Design

Around 1907, Moses Shongo (ca. 1858-1925), a member of the Seneca Nation and a curator on our staff, designed this wallpaper for M.H. Birge & Sons of Buffalo, a leading wallpaper manufacturer. It was used exclusively in the Hotel Seneca in Rochester, NY, which opened in 1908 and was demolished in 1969.

Handwritten notes in pencil, probably by Shongo, read:

Nun-Do-Wak-O-Noh means people of the great hill. Tsonontouans as near as the French would pronounce it. Dots and dash lines are wampum belts. Star the capitol of Five Nations. Five feathers pointing to the star are the five nations. Lacrosse stick within it work for original Indian game. Tanned animal skin pictures with different animals and birds for clans.

Cite as:

Collection of The Buffalo History Museum. Vertical File: Manufacturers – Birge.